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The Christian News-Letter

Edited by
J. H. OLDHAM

August 11th, 1943

DEAR MEMBER,

The completion of three years of the German occupation of France is an occasion for reviewing the fortunes of the Roman Catholic Church in France during that period. We are indebted to two articles in the issues of *The Tablet* of June 12th and 19th for much of the information that follows, though it has been supplemented from other sources. The data at present available are scanty, and while general tendencies may be noted, the range and depth of their influence must remain uncertain.

THE CHURCH IN FRANCE

The Vichy Government adopted from the beginning a policy of extreme and frantic "clericalism." The Minister of Education overreached himself in trying to put an end overnight to forty years of secularization in the schools, and his work had to be undone by his successor. Precipitate attempts to restrict divorce and protect Christian marriage equally defeated their ends. A "Labour Charter" which professed to embody Catholic social principles was regarded by those whom it affected as an instrument for dragooning labour for the benefit of Germany.

Many Roman Catholics were profoundly distrustful of the Vichy policy. They saw that Catholic social ideas must inevitably be discredited if they were associated with collaboration with an anti-Christian Nazi government, and that it could do no good to religion for the inadequacies of the Vichy Government to be decked out in high-sounding Christian phrases. The warning of M. Jacques Maritain against a "decoratively Christian State" was well understood in France.

The main strength of the resistance to Vichy came from the Christian laity, though among the upper classes there were many collaborationists. Large number of priests sympathized with, and actively shared in, the movement of resistance.

The Catholic hierarchy gave its strong support to Marshal Pétain, though the Archbishop of Toulouse took a more independent line. They were in the difficult position of having in the unoccupied zone a "National Government," which was trying to preserve such shreds of independence as were left to it and needed all the reinforcement it could find. The protests of the Cardinals and Bishops in France against Nazi policy have been less outspoken and vigorous than those of the hierarchy in Holland and Belgium and even in Germany itself. But when the atrocious deportations and maltreatment of the Jews took

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place a year ago, the Cardinals and Bishops of the occupied zone addressed a strong appeal to Marshal Pétain in the name of humanity and Christian principles to secure respect for justice and the claims of charity. A vigorous pastoral letter on the same subject was issued by the Archbishop of Toulouse. In May of this year a letter of protest against the conscription of French labour and the deportations to Germany, signed by the Cardinal Archbishops of Lyons, Paris and Lille, was read in all the churches of France.

Apart from the question of anti-Semitism the two chief matters in which the Church has found itself in opposition to the Government have been its policy in regard to labour organization and to youth movements, the principle involved being in each instance the same, i.e. whether the State should gather everything into its own hands or allow a diversity of effort. The Labour Charter of the Vichy Government allowed no trade unions to exist except those organized and controlled by the State. This is contrary to the doctrine of the Papal Encyclicals, which deny the right of the State to suppress absolutely private associations. Such efforts as were made to secure amendment of the Labour Charter were unavailing. But in spite of being deprived of legal existence, the trade unions have been able to survive. The Christian trade unions have kept in touch with one another (as well as with the general trade union movement) and have agreed on a common statement of the principles on which the future social and economic order should be based.

Resistance to the absorption of all youth organizations into a single movement controlled by the State was more successful. The hierarchy took its stand in 1941 in the following declaration: "If voices should be raised demanding the dissolution of these movements, we should be obliged to protest with all our strength against what would inevitably appear to us as an attack against the soul of France. There is more and more talk of a single Youth Movement, of a *Jeunesse Unique*. If that expression means that they demand the suppression of our Youth Movements, their spirit and their methods of formation, we shall not be able to accept it. Youth united in the service of the country? Yes. *Jeunesse Unie? Oui. Jeunesse Unique? Non.*" The determined opposition of the Church to the attempt of the State to make itself the supreme judge in every sphere of life is again proving, as often before in history, a bulwark of liberty.

The Church in France is suffering from the privations resulting from the German occupation. Some of these have a direct bearing on the future work of the Church; for example, seminaries are being closed because it is impossible to feed the students, and there will certainly be a grave shortage of priests in the years after the war when they will be most needed. In many districts, it is stated in an article quoted in *The Tablet*, the parish clergy are living on the border-line of starvation, and starvation, as the writer says, is an even greater hindrance to apostolic labours than penal laws. The peasants are generous in their support of their pastors, but the production of food is so closely controlled by the Government that there is very little that they can do.

The demands on labour are so severe that often no one can be secured to act as sacristan or church cleaners and scrubbers, whilst vegetable growing has in many instances to be added to the performance of priestly duties. "I have known one priest," says the writer of the article, "who has lived entirely on bread and olives; another who buys his bread only once a fortnight, so that it goes stale and he eats less. A *curé* of seventy-seven says Mass and teaches the catechism in three different churches, separated by three leagues of mountain road which he covers on a bicycle. And I have before my eyes the pathetic story of the death, at the age of seventy, of a *curé* of X—— in the Basses-Alpes, who was found frozen to death in his lonely room in the winter. He had been in the habit of covering twenty kilometres on foot every Sunday, to visit six parishes."

VOCATIONAL CLERGY

Almost simultaneously with the paper published as our last Supplement (about the work of an ordained member of the Iona Community as a craftsman in a mill) a letter reached me from the Bishop of Southampton, written quite independently of the other paper, but raising the same issue. The fact that these ideas are stirring in different quarters shows that the mind of the Church is beginning to awaken to the implications of the fundamental changes in society which have brought it about that the relations of men with one another are no longer in the main territorial but vocational. The Bishop sees how urgent it is that the organization of the Church should be adapted to the new pattern of society. New answers are being given to the question, "Who is my neighbour?" and to go on stolidly as though the old answers were still valid is to lose touch with social reality. The possibilities of the future lie in active co-operation with the dynamic movements of social life.

The Bishop recalls some of the Supplements in the Christian News-Letter dealing with new movements in the fields of agriculture and of industry, and points out "the apparent *irrelevance* of the Church to these situations."

> "The parson," he says, "feels 'out of it,' not only in a factory but on a farm, and the ordinary member of the Church in industry or agriculture feels that the Church has very little guidance to give him about the day-to-day moral decisions which confront him in the course of his work. One reason for this is the fact that *the territorial organization of the Church leaves the characteristic spheres of modern life practically untouched.* The parochial system needs to be supplemented by another approach; but I doubt whether the idea of appointing chaplains to factories, chain stores, large offices and so on will carry us very far unless the chaplains work *with* the workers in the same work. Would it not be worth trying the experiment of what we might call, for want of a better term, *vocational* clergy, or rather of extending the experiment which already works fruitfully in the case of schoolmasters and University teachers to farming and industrial management?

"In country districts it will become increasingly necessary to unite country benefices, with the result that the time-honoured provision of a resident priest for every village is going by default. The aim would be to restore priest-farmers in those villages which in the coming days still have a Church but no resident priest. The priest-farmer would be in the position of licensed curate to the resident whole-time priest of the neighbouring village, and the latter would do the pastoral work of the whole area, the priest-farmer working out his Christian vocation in farming, in his pastoral relationship to those in his employ, and in his Sunday ministrations in Church.

"This plan would have to come into being through a long-term policy, which would be initiated by an appeal for young men to offer themselves for special training, which would have to include a thorough training in agriculture and an equally thorough training for the priesthood.

"The same plan might be followed in regard to industry—early selection and long training, but it is possible that owing to the different demands made by farming and industrial management it might be found better to appeal to some men who have already established themselves in management to come forward for ordination and return to their profession. These men would be licensed under seal so that they might have a recognized status in the diocese and help with Sunday work. There would indeed be no *a priori* reason why these vocational priests should not pass over into the parochial ministry as naturally as schoolmaster-parsons do now; and some of them would no doubt be called to the episcopate."

There are many difficulties, as the Bishop recognizes, in giving effect to his proposals. But if a move in the direction to which he points is seen to be a necessity, the means of overcoming them will be found.

I hope that this letter and the last Supplement may lodge in the minds of readers of the Christian News-Letter a question of major importance in regard to the relevance of the ministries of the Church to modern needs and that the ideas will continue to ferment.

RELIGION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

The Bishop of Ripon, who has recently returned from a visit, sadly interfered with by illness, to the Forces in the Middle East, including the Army, Navy and Air Force, writes to me that what he has seen leaves a totally different impression from the picture given in a letter quoted in the Christian News-Letter four weeks ago. The writer of the letter in question is a careful and thoughtful observer, and I am sure that he gave an accurate account of the facts which came within his own observation. But he explicitly warned us against the danger of generalization, and his evidence, so far as it relates to the Middle East, belonged to a date considerably earlier than the Bishop's visit. It is good to know that there is another side to the picture.

The Bishop was amazed by the responsiveness of men of all ranks whom he came across. He had many informal conferences, arranged

on the spur of the moment, with large bodies of men who were ready to discuss moral and spiritual problems with an eagerness seldom found at home. In the Cathedral at Cairo, which holds 2,000 men, evensong has to be duplicated every Sunday to accommodate those who wish to attend.

In the Middle East alone there are over 500 men who intend after the war to enter the Christian ministry. The Bishop interviewed a good many of them and found the quality unusually high. Courses of instruction have been organized by the chaplains. A special course for ordination candidates was held at Jerusalem over Whitsun. A lending library of religious literature has been established, and I hear from a chaplain who is on leave that he has placed orders for books to the amount of £250.

It is not surprising that to those who are close to the grim realities of life and death the proportion of things should appear differently. As was said in an article in the *Daily Mirror* a few weeks ago, " Life is shorn of all its artificial superlatives, and you get to looking at your own existence in a different light. It is difficult to explain this feeling that comes over you, but all of us who have been up there have experienced it at some time or other. You get a different feeling towards things in general. You realize the pettiness of so many things that you once thought important, and the importance of so many that you previously took for granted."

In a printed letter the Bishop writes :—

" It is impossible to move about amongst the men of our armies in Middle East and to talk to chaplains, individually or in groups, without becoming acutely conscious of a growing impatience with our unhappy divisions. The majority of ordinary Christian laymen in M.E.F. would echo Bishop Brent's plea, uttered at the end of the last war, ' The world is too great and its problems too large for a divided Christendom.' . . . These men are wondering whether, when they get home again, they will find their home Churches still engrossed in narrowly parochial affairs, still lacking any programme commensurate with the vastness of the issues at stake in the post-war world."

The question by which the mind of the Bishop is deeply exercised is whether the Church at home will move far enough and fast enough to be ready when the war is over to absorb and nourish the new religious life which has begun to stir among those serving in the Forces. He pleads for preparation to be begun immediately in the parishes and congregations, and for a strong lead to be given jointly by the authorities of the Churches.

A CHRISTIAN BASIS FOR RECONSTRUCTION

Four months ago (C.N-L. No. 179) we published as a Supplement a Statement on " A Just and Durable Peace " issued by the Federal Council of Churches in America. We gave the full text in the Christian News-Letter because the competence of its authors, the labour devoted to its preparation, and its endorsement by the central organ of Protestant Christianity in the United States singled it out from the general

run of pronouncements on post-war reconstruction, and entitled it to be taken as a starting-point for further discussion.[1]

The Statement has been carefully studied during the past few weeks by the Peace Aims Group under the auspices of the British Council of Churches, and the conclusions of the group in Great Britain have been issued under the signatures of the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, the Bishop of Chichester, the Moderator of the Church of Scotland, the Moderator of the Free Church Council, the Secretaries of the Congregational and Baptist Unions, the Rev. W. J. Noble (ex-President of the Methodist Conference), the Very Rev. J. Hutchison Cockburn, the Master of Balliol, Sir Richard Livingstone, Dr. William Paton, Sir J. Hope Simpson and Mr. R. H. Tawney.

We reproduce this further Statement also in full, so that our members may have both documents at hand for reference in the future consideration of the problems of the peace. As Mr. John Foster Dulles, the Chairman of the American Commission, writes to me, "the more discussions in our two countries can centre round certain common theses, the more apt we will be to come to common results."

"We welcome unreservedly the statement on 'The Bases of a Just and Durable Peace,' and believe that the main principles are such as to commend themselves to Christian minds in this country.

"Christians must recognize that there is need to hold the selfish desires of men in check and to subordinate force to law, while also seeking to secure that the law is just. The lawless use of power for selfish ends will wreck all hopes of justice, fellowship and peace.

"The present war is more than a conflict of nations: it is a conflict of Faiths. Real victory depends on the clarity of our aims beyond the military defeat of the enemy, and on the completeness and sincerity of our dedication to those aims.

"1. We agree that 'the peace must provide the political framework for a continuing collaboration of the United Nations and in due course of neutral and enemy nations.' We hold also that the achievement of such a world political organization will only be possible if it is the expression of a unity of action wrought out in facing the complex problems of world reconstruction. We shall be confronted with certain immediate and urgent needs, supreme among which will be the feeding of hungry people and the restoration of order. Moreover, we attach great importance to a vigorous dealing with the question of security, assuring to all peoples freedom from fear. It is not part of our task as Christians to say how this should be realized, but to insist on its primary importance. The acceptance of responsibility by the United Nations should be preparatory to the inclusion of the neutral and vanquished nations in this corporate system of world order as soon as political and psychological considerations permit.

"2. We agree that 'this peace must make provision for bringing within the scope of international agreement those economic and

[1] Owing to a slip in the cabled statement the third point was reproduced in our Supplement in an erroneous form. It ought to read: "The peace must make provision for an organization to adapt the treaty structure of the world to changing underlying conditions."

financial acts of national government which have widespread international repercussions.' We would go much further, and consider that a permanent aim of the nations of the world should be to develop and to mobilize the resources of the earth with a view to achieving for all peoples freedom from want. By restoring this sense of purpose to the productive machine and by awakening the people of the richer countries to a sense of responsibility throughout the world, Britain and America will find the best hope of eliminating unemployment within their own territories.

" To undertake this task would inevitably promote fellowship and goodwill.

" 3. We agree on the need ' to adapt this treaty structure of the world to changing conditions.' We doubt the feasibility of establishing a special mechanism for the revision of treaties, but we hope that a continuing co-operation in economic tasks and in the maintenance of world order may create a readiness to negotiate together such as would enable the world structure to be responsive to the need for change.

" 4. We agree that not only good government, but self-government should be the goal for all men, and that the progress of backward or subject people towards complete responsibility is a proper subject of international concern. We welcome the idea of an international colonial commission which would have the right to inform itself upon the condition of subject territories, to report upon breaches of international undertakings to whatever world political organization is created, to supervise the application of pooled international resources in carrying forward economic and social development, and to watch over the development of self-government.

" 5. There must be an adequate international control of armed power, and we hope that the present association of the United Nations may develop into a world political organization in which would be vested armed power sufficient to prevent renewed aggression and the preparation of future wars. It is essential to approach this question by a search for the means of a responsible, combined maintenance of peace, rather than by an effort to limit armaments. The vanquished enemies must be disarmed, but at the same time there must be open to their citizens the same opportunities as other people enjoy to an equal share in all that conduces to the good life, so soon as and so long as their states behave as good neighbours.

" 6. We wholly agree upon securing to individuals everywhere the right to religious and intellectual liberty. Not only the rights of conscience, of individuals, but the proper freedom of Churches ought to be respected and preserved, with academic freedom to universities. No world settlement which does not give reasonable security and freedom to religious, cultural and other minorities, and especially to the Jewish people, can be said to have succeeded.

" Above all else is needed the recognition of clear moral standards which the nations and the citizens accept, in other words, the Law and Purpose of God, as a standard for our conduct and a law to obey."

In regard to the crucial question of the treatment of Germany after the war an admirable basis for discussion is provided in a report by a study group at Chatham House.[1] If it has no final word to say on the subject, it brings impressively before us the variety and complexity of the factors of which account has to be taken.

"THE MAN BORN TO BE KING"

I have been waiting for a chance to underline a suggestion made by the Dean of Durham, formerly the Headmaster of Eton, in a letter a few weeks ago to *The Times*. It is that Miss Sayers' broadcast plays, *The Man Born to be King*,[2] should be reverently read in all schools at least once during a pupil's career. He suggests also that there is no way in which funds available for religious education could be better expended than in meeting the cost of the necessary books. The suggestion has, to my knowledge, the warm approval of other headmasters. It is for educators to say how effect can best be given to it, but it is hard to think of anything that would do more to imprint the Gospel story on the mind of the coming generation or to open their eyes to its relevance to our own time.

THE SUPPLEMENT

The writer of this week's Supplement, after taking an honours degree in "Greats" at Oxford, served as a nurse in France during the last war. After serving for a short time as a trade union organizer she taught philosophy at Bangor, and then became a tutor under the Oxford Joint Committee at Lincoln, where for seventeen years she taught a purely working-class group and started a People's Service Club for the unemployed, which became widely known through its notable success in giving back to those out of work a sense of having a function in the community. During the first two years of the present war, including the period of the blitz, she was warden of a settlement in Lambeth, and is now undertaking a piece of social research. In seizing upon and bringing to our attention an incident with far-reaching implications, which may easily be overlooked, Miss Cameron has put us in her debt.

Yours sincerely,

J. H. Oldham

[1] *The Problem of Germany*. The Royal Institute of International Affairs, Chatham House, St. James's Square, London, S.W. 1. 2s. 6d.

[2] Gollancz. 10s. 6d.

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THE CHRISTIAN NEWS-LETTER

Supplement to No. 188

AUGUST 11TH, 1943

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THE VOTE AGAINST THE AFFILIATION OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY

By ALICE CAMERON

That the Labour Party should have rejected the application for affiliation of the Communist Party at their annual Conference is a fact of considerable significance, some of it not immediately obvious. For at the present moment in history the Communist Party had such advantages in its favour as it had never had before and may never have again. Owing to the heroism of its population and the excellence of its military organization the Russian nation enjoys the admiration of all English people, including the working class. To them, moreover, it is particularly precious as an example of what can be done by a classless society in which the welfare of the toilers is the end of the state, and all have an equal opportunity to give of their best. While organizing informal education in an Army Depot of fifteen thousand men, including a large number of civilian factory workers, I found that Russia is to-day to the majority of them the model to be followed after the war, even at the cost of revolution. But how? That is the question to which this vote against the British Communist Party offers a very definite answer.

The speakers who opposed affiliation were careful to make it clear that it was the peculiar strategy or methodology of the Communist Party to which they objected, its means not its ends.

ILLEGITIMATE METHODS

What are these means which have roused such disapproval? Anyone who has taken part in Labour Committees and like activities during the period between the wars will have been brought into contact with certain Communist methods. One method has been to "discredit" fellow workmen or Labour representatives with whose ideas or influence the Party do not agree. This process of discrediting a man means that they ignore his merits however well known, traduce his motives and exaggerate or misconstrue all his actions in an evil sense. What makes this attack so disturbing is that it is done confessedly without any belief in its truth. The critics will confess quite frankly that they know their victim is not guilty, but their tactics demand that his influence with the workers shall be undermined and so they must abuse him. Another very common policy of theirs is to "use" people. This means that someone who apparently had nothing in common with them is suddenly courted and caressed until he has given them some support or help, after which if he is no longer useful he may be dropped.

A third and perhaps the most fundamental feature of their strategy is that of making a change of front at a moment's notice and putting forward in support a series of arguments in flat contradiction to the ones expressed just before. Whether all these points of strategy were copied directly from Russian Communist practice and whether in that

case they are really the same when translated into British forms need not be considered here. The important point is that while the methods of the Party seem to have been in the main highly successful in Russia they have been an almost complete failure here. Why have the above tactics been rejected? In the first place for quite obvious reasons. Most of the leaders of Labour, small or great, have found themselves at one time or another attacked in the peculiarly mean, unjust way mentioned above, and they are not likely to forget it or to trust the Communist Party in future. In the same way those who find that they have been made use of without consideration as tools rather than as " comrades " will vow never to be fooled in the same way again.

Most important of all, those who have been convinced by the arguments of the leaders that such is the right thing to do will be thrown into confusion and bewilderment at best, or at worst will feel betrayed and abandoned, when the said leaders make a right-about turn.

The above are only a selection of what Mr. Morrison called " the tricks " of the British Communist Party. One which was common just before the war consisted in those who were members of the Party flatly denying the fact, so that they could join the Labour Party which refused to accept Communist members.

The effect of all these dodges was to destroy after a time all confidence in those who had suffered from such deceptions. As a prominent speaker said at the Conference, " Mr. Pollit says he will be loyal to the Labour Party. I don't believe him. He says so and so. I don't believe him." That is the normal effect of a policy of deception once it is discovered.

There are other effects of this policy which to a Communist must be even more disturbing. Its psychological effect upon young men who enter the Party in the hope of serving the working class is usually either to corrupt their mental and moral integrity or to reduce them to a state of inner bewilderment and confusion. Large numbers leave the movement in disgust every year and retire into private life with a hatred for politics in every form. To understand how this comes about one has only to imagine, as one lad described to me, how cynical it makes one " when one has been trained to find evil motives in everyone, and where one does not find them, to invent them against the evidence." To regard people as means to be used contemptuously and with one's tongue in one's cheek is a hardly less demoralizing outlook. The root of the evil is perhaps most apparent when men are instructed to deny what they believe true and put forward arguments the reverse of those they themselves found convincing. It may be urged that all politics involve some compromise with one's private views and opinions, but in other parties there is always the assumption that a man has a right to follow his conscience, and if he thinks a course morally wrong or a dictum untrue he can resign. In the British Communist Party a man is expected to abdicate all private judgment and conscience, not merely at a crisis but all the time, and that not to a single and consistent authority, but to one which may deny to-morrow all that it declares to-day. The effect of this on an intelligent mind can only be to produce either moral or mental dishonesty or both—a state which Mr. Morrison has stigmatized as " unclean."

TRADITIONS OF THE BRITISH LABOUR MOVEMENT

The full meaning of the Labour Party rejection of such double-faced policy can only be recognized if we look back at its history since its foundation at the close of the last century. It had from the first a strongly moral and even religious outlook. Those who joined it from the ranks of the workers and their sympathizers from the middle class felt themselves to be fighting for justice and against oppression, and this could best be done by maintaining a high standard of honesty and sincerity among themselves as well as towards the outside world.

This high standard of sincerity and good faith was due to two factors. One was the selective power of the dangers and disadvantages which had to be borne by the workers who tried to organize their fellows. It was only the most sincere and disinterested who were keen enough to undertake the responsibility. Moreover, in speaking to their workmates they found that sincerity and personal conviction were most likely to persuade. The English working man is a straightforward, direct sort of person and it is that type of speaker whom he is disposed to trust. Another fact which told in the same direction was that many of the leaders (Arthur Henderson, for instance) were lay preachers in one of the Free Churches and inclined to look upon their political work as a form of religious duty calling for the exercise of individual conscience. In the period between the wars this high moral standard, " the nonconformist conscience," was weakened in two ways. The average labour leader, both among the rank and file and in the paid positions because more highly educated, was more often personally ambitious and had imbibed much of the moral scepticism and pessimism common to the intelligentsia with whom he came in contact.

The influence of the Free Churches and of religion of any kind had diminished, and its standards and inspiration were no longer taken for granted. Finally, the Communist Party itself had a certain influence on Labour circles. The policy of " using " people, even of telling the people what was known to be untrue was sometimes experimented with by " advanced " groups.

A TURNING OF THE TIDE

The Conference vote proves that this weakening of moral fibre has not gone far and slams the door very emphatically against any admission of it. Fortunately the demoralizing influences of the pre-war era in our civilization have lately given way to a tendency in the other direction, that is, towards greater and deeper sincerity in public relations.

Instances of this new climate of honesty might be cited from widely diverse quarters, and in speakers appealing to different sections of the public, but all striking in their own way the same note of personal honesty.

Beginning with the man in the street, there is no doubt that the effect of Churchill's speeches during the crisis has depended less upon their rhetorical splendour than on their patent frankness and self-revelation, and the same is true of the national leaders in this country. Turning to quite a different quarter, the modern school of poets such as T. S. Eliot, Stephen Spender and others are remarkable for the profound and painful honesty with which they face the world and their own

reactions to it. The contrast between this attitude—the only one he thinks possible for a poet—and the political (by which he means the communist) one has been carefully discussed by Stephen Spender in one of his latest books. Other instances can be found in the wide popularity of such leaders as George Lansbury and Dick Shepherd, and of such writers as Priestley, whose influence seems due to the impression they made and make of transparent honesty.

Again it is characteristic of this trend that the accounts of the "blitz" in London published by American journalists and travellers read more like personal confessions of a searching experience than the sophisticated "dope" which used to be fashionable. The popularity of war books like Hillary's "The Last Enemy" and Simpson's "One of our Airmen is Safe" points in the same direction. A further illustration is the effect of the sermons and addresses of Archbishop Temple.

Thus in voting for honesty and for expressing one's real mind and against the "tongue in the cheek" approach the Labour Party is not only proving true to its own traditions and standards, but also falling in with a powerful trend in the national life, which if it is developed to the utmost may of itself bring about a revolution. No doubt the reason why honesty and sincerity in the expression of one's thoughts in public has been so often discarded at times and never fully practised is because some have been ashamed of what they might disclose and others were afraid that if they gave themselves away others might take advantage of them. As long as they were clever enough, like Plato's bad man, to appear good while remaining otherwise, they could hope to succeed. Lately, however, people have learnt to appreciate true sincerity and to reject the sham, and the honest man has a chance to come by his own.

POSSIBILITIES OF THE FUTURE

And what a heritage that might be supposing people in office and power could learn to speak with frankness and openness to the people for whom they work, as indeed many of them have learnt to do during this war (no doubt because their real aims and intentions were the same as those of the people). A relationship of mutual trust might be set up. Mutual trust is not merely satisfactory and reassuring in itself, but it acts as a release to latent capacities, since people are no longer paralysed or inhibited by suspicion and fear. Such latent capacities in co-operation might carry this country far. The prospect is opened by the Labour Party's rejection of the opposite way. Here too is a direction in which Christians may exert their influence by seeking to get rid of all humbug and hypocrisy—both in private and in public life, both as individuals and in their corporate capacity.

In so doing they may begin to win back for themselves and Him Whom they serve the influence and inspiration with the people which was lost before the war, for He is the Truth and only the truth shall prevail.

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RUSSIA AND THE CHRISTIAN WORLD

By REINHOLD NIEBUHR

I should like to consider the problem of our relations to Russia under two aspects—the motives which prompt the present and (as many of us hope) future alliance between Russia and the West, and, on the other hand, the appreciations and criticisms of the culture and religion which underlie Russian politics, that are incumbent on us because of, and despite of, the alliance.

To Roman Catholic and continental Protestant critics, who like to suggest that the alliance between Russia and the Anglo-Saxon world is prompted by motives of "political expendiency," it is important to affirm that political expediency is nothing to be ashamed of when the future peace of the world is at stake. A global alliance, to which Russia has up to the present contributed more than her proportionate share, will win the victory in this war; and this global alliance must be the foundation of a future stable community of nations.

If that alliance falls apart everything is imperilled and the old anarchy threatens once more. Even if the alliance holds together the peace of the world is not secure; because we have yet to prove that the three leading powers will have the wit and wisdom, the conscience and the sense of justice, to use their power so that a democratic world order may gradually emerge. The unity of this alliance is not the end, but it is the beginning, of any promising scheme for world order. We can be fairly sure that if Russia is excluded from a genuinely mutual international accord she will finally draw Germany into her orbit and a new and more terrible war will be in the making. That is sufficient reason to justify the desire of thoughtful people in the Anglo-Saxon world for a substantial alliance with Russia. It is not sufficient reason to justify every possible price which Russia may request as part of the bargain.

It is now fairly apparent that among the Russian demands, territorial and strategic concessions will be more important than other considerations; and that her territorial demands will be considerable, including probably Bessarabia, Poland to the Curzon line, parts of Finland and the Baltic States. The part of this price which would be particularly difficult for the West to swallow would be the possible sacrifice of the Baltic States and the destruction of their Christian culture. The demand that the Baltic States must come within the Russian defence system seems plausible enough. On the other hand, it is to be hoped that some scheme may be found for preserving the cultural autonomy of the Baltics. It does not seem to me possible to resist most of the other territorial demands, more particularly since Russia promises to be very intransigent about them. It may be well for us to remember as we judge these demands that some of the claims of the Anglo-Saxon world will not seem any more just to Russia; and that the residual

mistrust which prompts these strategic claims of Russia is mutual. It represents the heritage of a generation of ideological conflict. This does not mean that Russia is not willing to enter into mutual relations with the western world. It does mean that her residual fears and mistrusts prompt her to ask for additional strategic security.

The second problem of arriving at a proper balance of appreciation and criticism of the Soviet system is more difficult than the statement of the rather simple political logic which dictates our alliance. If we begin on the appreciative side I see no way of improving upon the Archbishop of Canterbury's basic principle of interpretation. It may be remembered that he spoke some time ago of communism as a Christian heresy in distinction to Nazism as an anti-Christian paganism. That seems to me to state the important distinction admirably and succinctly. Communism is a heresy, but it is not anti-Christian. It is not anti-Christian because it shares devotion to universal standards of justice with the Christian world. It does not believe in the right of a master race. It has, in fact, made tremendous contributions to the solution of the problem of race prejudice. It does not make power self-justifying. As a matter of fact, it has an ultimate utopian confidence in the possibility of eliminating power from politics ; it believes that the state will in the end " wither away." It may be rather cynical in its use of force as it seeks to prepare for this consummation. But its basic creed always saves it from pure cynicism.

The passion for social justice is furthermore a part of the prophetic Christian heritage. Marxism is wrong in believing that property is the only source of sin in society. But property distinctions, particularly as modern technical civilization has aggravated them, is a very grave source of injustice in social life. We ought not to criticize what is defective about the Marxist theory of property and sin without also appreciating the great contribution which socialist thought and life has made to the solution of a grave problem, toward which the Christian contribution has been, as yet, minimal.

Marxism as a religion claims to have a final answer to life's ultimate problem. This claim is a grave error. Marxism as a political system claims to have an ultimate answer to an immediate problem : that of achieving a tolerable justice in modern society. Even that claim is wrong. But the political error is less grievous than the religious one, because Marxism actually has a proximate answer to the immediate and proximate problem of social justice.

It may be worth mentioning in passing that, while it is wrong to assume that the Russian capacity of resistance was purely derived from communism, it must certainly be true that the absence of class distinctions and the lack of special property interests must have contributed to the Russian power. Could the Dnieper dam have been dynamited for purposes of defence if Russia had been capitalistic ? Is not the energy of the Russian war effort a very telling refutation of all previous liberal criticisms of socialism, according to which socialism was supposed to destroy the power of initiative ?

The universal standards of justice implicit in Marxism and the passion for social justice belong to the prophetic movement of Chris-

tianity. This does not, of course, obscure the fact that the official Russian doctrine is atheistic. There is an implicit and mechanized sense of divine providence in the Marxist idea of a dialectic of history, presiding over historical destiny, which is, perhaps, closer to the Christian sense of providence than most of secular bourgeois culture with its excessive reliance upon the human will and its lack of any feeling for historical destiny. The Russians are nevertheless atheists. Marxism is part of the whole secularization of modern bourgeois society. The Russians embraced this atheism with religious fervour. They will probably repent of it in time.

I do not believe that we ought to sing too many hymns of praise when Stalin frees the Church, as he probably will. We ought not to be too naïve about that because the freed Church may not be really free. It will probably move within the orbit of the Russian State. It will not have the final right which makes the Christian Church in the real sense a Church : the right to mediate the judgment of God upon the sins of a nation. The real re-birth of Christianity will come in Russia ; but it will come by a more tortuous process than any governmental decree.

These considerations have already brought us to the critical aspect of our evaluation of the Russian culture. No good purpose is served by those highly illogical appreciations of Russia, according to which the Russian collaboration with us proves Russia to be, in fact, a democracy. The fact is that Russia is a dictatorship. It is a dictatorship based upon an illusion. The Marxist illusion which inspired it was the idea that a society could afford a dictatorship because, having fulfilled its task, it would itself " wither away."

This illusion is a part of the whole Marxist utopian illusion. Marxism expected a kingdom of God upon earth because it believed that property was the only root of sin. We know as Christians that the roots of historical evil lie deeper than that. We know too that human egotism will find a way of expressing itself on every new level of historical achievement.

It is significant that most of Stalin's present policies are an implicit disavowal of Marxist utopianism. Stalin has not yet explicitly disavowed any part of the Marxist creed. But it is quite obvious that the energy of Russia to-day is derived primarily from patriotism and from the sense of the limitless opportunities in history which the young people of Russia have, rather than from communism. As a matter of fact we may expect a real cultural and religious crisis in Russia in the decades to come, when it becomes apparent to the young people of Russia that no purely political answer to the problem of life, whether patriotic or communistic, can finally suffice.

We do indeed derive a part of the meaning of our life from our intimate relation to the organic communities of family and nation and from the fulfilment of our socio-historical tasks. That is why the Christian faith must incorporate both patriotism and the moral and social impulse expressed in communism. But man in his tragic majesty finally transcends all nations and all historic and political tasks and achievements. He requires a fulfilment of life which all communities

and all historical processes deny him, and which only God can give him. In that sense communism as a political religion is as false as Nazism as a political religion. It is not as false ethically, but it is as false religiously.

It would be a pity if Christian young people in the western world were to be persuaded by the prestige of the Russian achievement to espouse this political creed at the precise moment when it shows signs of becoming inadequate in Russia. There is in fact a good deal of uncritical nonsense in the appreciation of the Russian war achievement. We are told that the greatness of this achievement proves that the Marxist creed is as good as Christianity or better. By the same logic we might arrive at the conclusion that the Nazi creed is as good. The Nazis will finally break; but we have to bomb their cities unmercifully to break the spirit of Nazism. Is the power of our airplane production to determine the truth of our creeds ?

The fact is that all war efforts tend toward totalitarianism. Dictatorships actually have a certain advantage over democracy in war for that reason. They are more efficient. It is a great glory of our democratic life that we overcame the initial inefficiency of democracy and yet preserved our essential liberties. This is no easy achievement and we may well be proud of it. It is a greater achievement than the efficiency of dictatorships, whether communist or fascist. It is an achievement moreover toward which the Christian faith makes a solid contribution.

Without the Christian faith culture tends to degenerate either into an atomistic individualism according to which society is merely the servant of the individual, or into a mechanistic collectivism according to which the individual is merely a servant of the community. According to the Christian view the individual is the servant both of God and of the community, and the community is the servant both of God and of the individual. Furthermore, the individual's conscience has a final anchorage outside of all the majesties and powers of communities. The Christian injunction, " We must obey God rather than man," is the greatest resource of the democratic life, because it assures that the morally ambiguous realities of all human communities will continue to stand under the judgment of God.

Our collaboration with Russia must not prompt a servile and abject surrender of the heritage of our faith. If we are truly Christian we will allow God to speak to us through Russian achievements. We will be humble enough to appreciate what part of the prophetic tradition Russia incorporates. We will know that in some ethical aspects it is more truly Christian than we. But we will also have the self-respect to assert the integrity of our faith against the distortions of it which have become historic in Russia.

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